



City of Norman

November 12, 2013 Special Election Water Reclamation Improvement Projects and Sewer Rate Increase



Fast Facts

More stringent environmental rules to protect the Canadian River are one reason for the increase

Improvements are also needed to meet regulatory requirements

Failure to make the improvements may result in fines up to \$10,000 per day

The last wastewater rate increase was authorized in 1996

Existing rate for an average residential customer (using 3,000 gallons/month) is \$13.24 per month; the proposed increase will raise the rate \$3.74/month

The rate increase will apply to both residential and commercial customers

With the proposed rate increase, Norman will still have a comparable rate for the area

The effective date of the proposed increase will be December 1, 2013

On Tuesday, November 12, 2013, Norman residents will vote on authorizing an increase in the sewer service rates by an additional \$1.10 per month to the base charge and an additional \$1.10 per thousand gallons of sewage treated to the sewer use charge (commodity rate). These proposed increases raise the total monthly base charge to \$5.00 and the total average monthly sewer use charge to \$2.70 per thousand gallons. The sewer base and commodity rates have not been increased since 1996.

Many years ago, cities had simple sewage plants—facilities where sewage would flow to the outskirts of town where it was discharged into rivers and streams. Later, facilities became known as “Wastewater Pollution Control Facilities” with improved treatment processes to better control the pollution that was degrading the streams and rivers. Because treatment processes have evolved, opportunities have arisen for wastewater plants to better control pollution and utilize some of the water reclaimed for projects that would normally require drinkable water. Accordingly, in 2012, Norman’s facility was renamed the “Norman Water Reclamation Facility” to reflect how operations have evolved.

The Wastewater Master Plan, adopted by the Norman Utilities Authority in 2001, recommended expansion and upgrades to address existing and future wastewater system needs by utilizing better treatment methods. These recommendations recognize the value and importance of sustaining our water resources for the future. Since adoption of the Plan in 2001, sewer related rates, taxes and charges have funded over \$83 million in improvements to our wastewater system, in addition to funding day to day operations. Additional improvements must still be made.

In order to move forward with essential upgrades, a rate increase is needed. The Water Reclamation Facility upgrades are categorized into three major components:

- A. **Regulatory Driven**—New environmental rules to protect and improve the Canadian River are one reason for the increase. The regulatory driven improvements are to meet the latest State requirements. The new permit mandates additional disinfection and dissolved oxygen requirements of the wastewater prior to discharge into the Canadian River.
- B. **Operations and Maintenance Needs**—The maintenance related improvements are necessary to replace or repair outdated equipment. Some of the major treatment components were installed in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s and have reached the end of their expected service life and require replacement. Delaying these improvements increases operation and maintenance costs and risks failure of the treatment process.
- C. **Capacity Upgrades**—The facility is currently operating near capacity. The proposed project expands the treatment capacity at the South Water Reclamation facility to the level anticipated by the 2001 Wastewater Master Plan.

WATER RECLAMATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND SEWER RATE INCREASE ELECTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

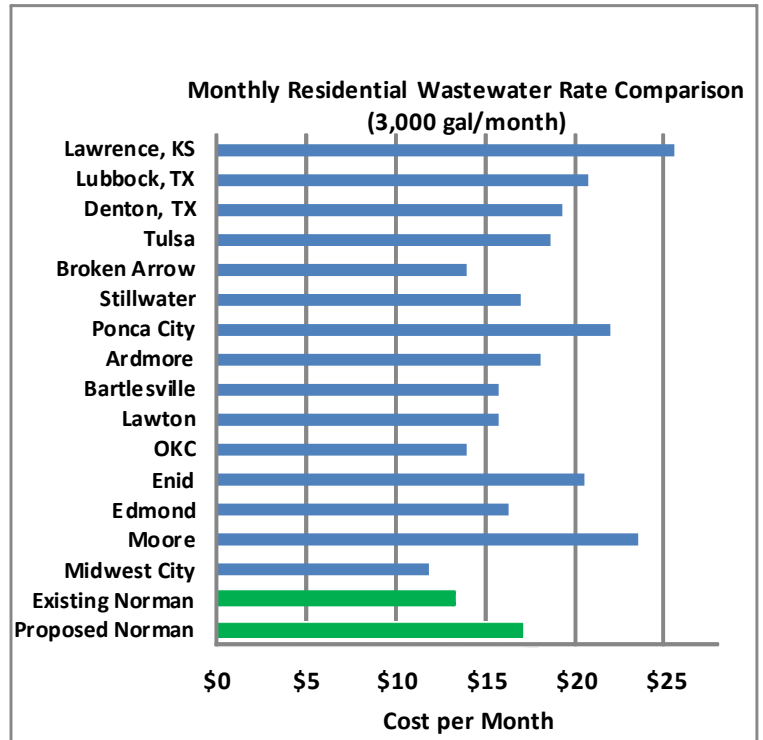
When is the election? Tuesday, November 12, 2013. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

What are the early voting dates? If you are a registered voter in Norman, you can vote at the Cleveland County Election Board from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 7th and Friday, November 8th prior to the election. The Cleveland County Election Board is located at 641 E. Robinson St., Suite 200. Absentee ballot applications can be obtained by contacting the Cleveland County Election Board by phone at (405) 366-0210 during business hours or downloading the form from the website at www.clevelandcountyelectionboard.com.

How does the City propose to finance the improvements? The City proposes to pay for the Water Reclamation Facility upgrades with a combination of available funds and revenue bonds. Revenue bonds are loans secured by the pledge of wastewater utility revenues. The use of available funds will reduce the amount of the loan necessary for the upgrades. The loan will be repaid by revenues generated by the New Development Sewer Excise Tax and the proposed wastewater rate increase.

What will be the effect on my utility bill? If approved, an average Norman home's bill would increase by \$3.74 per month (using 3,000 gallons per month).

When would the increase go into effect? The effective date of the proposed increase would be December 1, 2013.



What happens if the rate increase is not approved and the regulatory improvements are not completed? Federal and state agencies require that the regulatory and capacity improvements be completed. If the City does not complete the improvements to operate as required, the City could face fines of up to \$10,000 per day.

If the rate increase passes, when will the work begin and be completed? Competitive bids for the project would be solicited in the Spring of 2014 and work started in the Summer of 2014. This is a three year project with the Water Reclamation Facility operating at all times during the construction.

What will be the results of the project? Legal compliance with federal and state requirements. The treated wastewater discharged to the Canadian River will be disinfected and better for the environment. The capacity of the treatment plant will be increased enough to satisfy the City's needs for many years. Odor control equipment will be in place greatly reducing odors from the plant. Emergency generators will support plant operations during power outages.

For additional information, please contact: The City of Norman Action Center by phone at 366-5396, by emailing the Action.Center@normanok.gov or the City's website www.normanok.gov



Discharge of treated wastewater into Canadian River

Proposed Water Reclamation Rates

Average Residential Increase \$3.74/month (3,000 gallons)

Existing Rate

**\$3.90 Base sewer charge
\$1.60/1,000 gal (80% of
Winter water use)**

Proposed Rate

**\$5.00 Base sewer charge
\$2.70/1,000 gal (80% of
Winter water use)**

Average Commercial Increase \$7.39/month (4,000 gallons)

Existing Rate

**\$3.90 Base sewer charge
\$1.60/1,000 gal (80% actual
water use)**

Proposed Rate

**\$5.00 Base sewer charge
\$2.70/1,000 gal (80% actual
water use)**

Water Reclamation Construction Estimate

Component	Estimated Costs
Increased Capacity	\$ 30,900,000
Renew/Replace old equipment	\$ 18,400,000
Regulatory	\$ 9,100,000
Odor Control	\$ 4,700,000
Total	\$ 63,100,000



**Water Reclamation Facility after
proposed improvements**



City of Norman

P. O. Box 370
201 W. Gray
Norman, OK 73069

Phone
405-366-5396

E-mail
action.center@normanok.gov

NOVEMBER 12TH SPECIAL ELECTION WATER RECLAMATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND SEWER RATE INCREASE ELECTION



Printed on 30% recycled paper

We're on the web!
www.normanok.gov

2013 WATER RECLAMATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND SEWER RATE INCREASE ELECTION BALLOT LANGUAGE

PROPOSITION I

“SHALL ORDINANCE NO. O-1314-8 OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 21-112 OF CHAPTER 21 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NORMAN BY INCREASING THE SEWER SERVICE RATES BY AN ADDITIONAL ONE DOLLAR AND TEN CENTS (\$1.10) PER MONTH FOR A BASE SEWER CHARGE OF FIVE DOLLARS AND ZERO CENTS (\$5.00) AND AN ADDITIONAL ONE DOLLAR AND TEN CENTS (\$1.10) PER THOUSAND GALLONS OF SEWAGE TREATMENT FOR A SEWER USE CHARGE OF TWO DOLLARS AND SEVENTY CENTS (\$2.70) PER THOUSAND GALLONS OF SEWAGE TREATMENT BE APPROVED?”